



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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TO: EI Program Directors
Early Intervention Executive Directors
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FROM: Ron Benham, Director, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition
Patti Fougere, Assistant Director, Early Childhood Programs
Rob Seymour, Assistant Director of Administration and Finance

DATE: August 18, 2010

RE: Updates and Clarifications to August 13, 2010 Fee System Teleconference

The Department of Public Health would like to thank providers for their participation in the Massachusetts Fee System Teleconference held on August 13, 2010. The following correspondence provides additional clarification to several issues/concerns that were raised on the call.

Annual Program Fee

As stated on the teleconference, families currently enrolled in early intervention will not be assessed a fee based on the new fee structure until one year after the current fee has been determined. The Massachusetts System of Payments included as part of the Part C Federal Application states that the DPH collects an **Annual Fee** based on family size and income for families enrolled in Early Intervention with a signed IFSP. Given that the practice throughout the field in how programs have presented the Fee to families is not universal, the Department is requiring that families currently enrolled not be assessed at the new fee structure until their annual assessment. The Department will utilize any overage in fee collection at the end of the year to offset the potential yield from the fee collection.

Suspension of Services

Suspension of services **may** occur for any amounts overdue past 60 days from the date of notification of the fee. It is at the discretion of the program to suspend services for non-payment of fees due. The suspension of services for non-payment is not mandatory and is consistent with the DPH current policy regarding collection of the fee; however programs may be financially at risk for collection of the annual assessment. The suspension of services process has been developed to support programs in their decision to suspend services for non-payment of the fee.

Documenting Service Coordination Activities

It is a federal requirement to provide services to eligible children and families in a timely manner. Massachusetts defines timely as 30 days from IFSP signature (consent to services). Programs can not delay the provision of services until the fee is paid. The written notice of suspension letter to families, an IFSP Review page or a progress note may serve as appropriate documentation of ongoing service coordination activities. A copy of all correspondence with families regarding the fee and/or suspension of the fee should be kept on file in the child's record.

The Department is in the process of compiling and responding to the additional questions that were raised on the Teleconference. The responses will be distributed shortly. The Department has also revised the Income Attestation Form to change the order of the signatures to address staff comfort level in witnessing the parent attestation of proof of income.

Please feel free to contact Patti Fougere at patti.fougere@state.ma.us or Rob Seymour at robert.seymour@state.ma.us with any additional questions or comments.